

Secular Democracy

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BJP In Disarray

There is a popular saying that appearance is most of the time deceptive and it is risky to conclude anything concrete on its basis about the reality. This is perfectly true about the state of affairs in the Sangh Parivar and its political front, the BJP. Superficially they appear to be on the top of the world after the assembly election results in Bihar. But knowledgeable observers are of the view that greater problems and tensions are ahead. Sangh Parivar, as the past experience indicates, has to choose between playing the second fiddle to Nitish Kumar and breaking away with him. In both the cases, it is going to be a loser. In the first instance, it is bound to lose its distinct identity and in the second case its very existence as a political entity may be in danger. If it labours under the illusion that it is relatively more popular than JD(U) because it has got more seats as compared to percentage of votes and begins implementing its communal agenda, it is bound to be shown the doors.

Thus there is no alternative for the BJP, Sangh Parivar's political front, except surrendering to the dictates of Nitish Kumar. It is crystal clear from the recent experiences. Just before the elections when the BJP tried to show that its icon Narendra Modi was going to play the role as a patron, Nitish was quick to call the bluff. He returned the sum Modi government had given to Bihar towards alleviating the sufferings of the flood affected and withdrew the invitation to BJP leaders to dine with him. The Parivar had no alternative but to eat a humble pie. In the years to come, it will know and behave as his most obedient follower because power and all that goes with it are more precious than principles.

This is obvious from what has happened in the neighbouring state of Jharkhand. Forgetting all the insults and humiliations suffered at the hands of Shibu Soren, BJP agreed to all his conditions and joined hands with his party, obviously it could not resist the temptations

of power and the loot that goes with it. Newspapers have been full of reports how businessmen, especially mining Mafia, have succeeded in bringing about the coalition. They hope to play the role of wire pullers notwithstanding the objections from people like Yashwant Sinha because they have a hotline to Nagpur whose most obedient pupils head and manage the BJP. It is a different matter that the people of Jharkhand are, sooner or later, going to see through the game and call the bluff.

The BJP and its allies have tried to wreck our parliamentary system by not allowing the two houses to function for weeks. They have an utter disregard for the tenets of parliamentary system. It immediately brings to mind what Hitler did some eight decades ago to German Parliament.

The BJP has adopted a holier than thou approach on the question of corruption, but it is suffering from a very short memory. It forgets, though the

people do not, that Bangaru Laxman, as its president, was shown on camera by *Tehelka*, taking bribe. Though he was removed, he was sought to be propitiated by rewarding his wife with a seat in Lok Sabha.

Its 'strong leader' who unsuccessfully tried to give the country a 'decisive government', was once involved in the Jain-Hawala case. He was let off on the technical ground that private diaries could not be accepted by the court as proof of corruption. Doubts, however, persisted in the mind of people. It was expected of the 'determined' leader to ask for an independent commission, consisting of persons like Anna Hazare, Sri Sri Ravishankar, etc. to look into the case and give its verdict. His involvement in the Babari Masjid destruction is still fresh and his alibi that he was trying to persuade the mob not to indulge in destruction has not cut any ice.

The BJP has been making a great hullabaloo as regards corruption, yet the fact remains that the most corrupt chief minister of the day belongs to its fold. The Lok Ayukt has raised several questions of serious nature as regards his honesty. He has gone a great length to enrich his progeny. His latest action of driving his son

and daughter out of his official residence is nothing but a gimmick. It is not going to convince people at large. Even his colleagues in the BJP are not convinced but they cannot do anything as he is closer to the people that sit in Nagpur and run the various outfits of the Parivar. It is an open secret that Karnataka has mining Mafia and others who make money by hook or crook and also fill the coffers of their patrons by way of *Guru Dakshina*.

The latest episode involving Sudarshan, a former head of the RSS, illustrates that madness has assumed an epidemic form and inflicted even the highest ones in the organization. It claims to be a custodian of Indian culture but the kind of language it uses against women is horrifying. In fact, it consists of the lumpens who have nothing to do with culture and decency. Had it been not so, Sudarshan could have been immediately sent to Kanke near Ranchi, the asylum built by the British for the elite of those days.

Recently evidence of corruption taking hold of the BJP has come from two of the people whose closeness to it cannot be doubted. One is Arun Shourie who till recently adorned

its ranks as a minister and member of Rajya Sabha. In an interview to journalist Karan Thapar of the CNN-IBN, Shourie charged BJP to its softness towards corruption and its perpetrators. Second, Baba Ramdev, the yoga teacher, has alleged that a minister in the BJP-led government asked him for a bribe to the tune of Rs 2 crore. Weeks have elapsed and there is no reaction from the BJP, not to talk of taking any concrete action.

Whatever the RSS may say of its 'glorious' past, the people know of its non-participation in the freedom movement, its nearness to Godse, demolition of the Babari Masjid and Gujarat riots. It is claimed that Godse had no connection with the Sangh but his brother Gopal Godse, after the release from jail, came out with a book rubbishing this denial. Let the Sangh choose a panel of retired judges of the Supreme Court and ask for a thorough investigation in this controversy so that the matter is settled once for all.

About its being a custodian of Hindu culture, one may recall the saying of the late Nirode C. Chaudhury that they suffered from "barbaric ignorance."

□

BHAGWAT PURAN OF A DIFFERENT KIND

Conflating Hinduism and Hindutva

□ *Subhash Gatade*

Mohan Bhagwat, the 'young' supremo of an eighty plus-year-old exclusively male cultural organization called the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, is in high spirits these days.

It is not very difficult to understand the glee on his face which has to do with the latest developments in the cause *célèbre* of the *Sangh Parivar*. One can even notice that every member of this different kind of 'family' also seems to be upbeat, its representatives can be found in the neighbourhood playground in the morning doing drills, playing games or listening to '*sermons*' of their seniors which they call *baudhik*.

The Ayodhya verdict, that deliberated on the sixty plus-year-old legal dispute over the title of a piece of land where a mosque stood for the last five hundred years and which was demolished by hordes of gangs inspired by the ideas the *Sangh Parivar* still espouses, has in fact come as a blessing in disguise for Bhagwat. While every peace and justice loving person felt betrayed with the judgment that neither mentioned the criminal act of demolition of the mosque, or the blows it gave to the Indian Constitution and the crude manner in which it rediscovered the virtues of faith, it has emboldened the Parivar which had never felt comfortable with the rule of law enshrined in the Constitution.

Even a cursory glance at the making of Constitution provides detail of the manner in which the then leaders of project *Hindutva* opposed the whole process and wanted that newly independent nation adopt *Manusmriti* – the code of conduct of the Hindus scripted by Manu in its place. From time to time their fascination for Manu's edict, which supports the hierarchical division of society based on caste and gender and denies basic human rights to the wider populace, has been visible in very many ways. **It was not for nothing that when the BJP, one of the affiliated organizations of the RSS, came to power at the Centre twelve years ago, it did not waste much time in appointing a Commission to review the**

Constitution. Although they could not tinker with it as they lacked the necessary majority, they still made their intentions clear.

As any neutral observer would be able to tell, apart from the 'vindication' of their ideas the verdict has solved many of the immediate problems facing the *Parivar*. One is the talk of disarray in the fraternity with every other affiliated organization trying to put the blame on the other for the dip in their collective fortunes.

Gone also is the defensive posture which the RSS had to adopt when recently many of its 'wholetimers' (called *Pracharaks* in their lexicon) were found to be involved in terrorist acts, with sleuths of different investigation agencies raiding their houses and parading these *Pracharak* terrorists hooded like common criminals. In fact the situation seemed so serious that in June the top leadership of the RSS assembled for a five-day emergency meeting in Jodhpur to deliberate on the whole situation. Anyone can guess that the overall mood within the *Parivar* was quite gloomy.

The verdict has altered the scene completely. Sensing this opportunity when the secular-democratic camp has gone on the defensive and is contemplating their next line of action, like a true General Bhagwat has decided to strike back. Basing himself on the age-old maxim 'offence is the best defence' he seems to have decided to take the plunge to take the battle to the camp of the 'pseudo-secularists' themselves.

One is reminded of the manner in which Balasaheb Deoras, the third supremo of the RSS, went round the country claiming victory (*Jitam Maya – We have Won*) after the Emergency was over (1977) and the Janata Party had come to Power.

The high moral posture adopted by the likes of Deoras about the 'valiant struggle by the RSS against the Emergency' did not last long when it was disclosed that the same Deoras had written long letters to Indira Gandhi and tried to persuade Vinoba Bhave to mediate so that the ban on the Sangh is lifted. The Sangh leadership had even directed thousand of its volunteers/activists

lodged in different jails to give an undertaking to the jail authorities assuring them of 'good behaviour' if they were released from jail. (For details of the correspondence readers may refer to RSS by D.R.Goyal, Rajkamal, Delhi.)

II

TERRORISM, Hindus are oxymoron: Mohan Bhagwat

Taking strong exception to the use of the term 'saffron or Hindu terror', RSS chief Mr Mohan Bhagwat said on October 17, 2010 terrorism and Hindus are "oxymoron" and can never be linked to each other.

"There is only one country left in the world on which you can't put the blame of terrorism and that country is India, Terrorism and Hindus, terrorism and saffron, and terrorism and the Sangh are oxymoron and can never be related to each other.

"This (effort to connect the two) was an attempt to

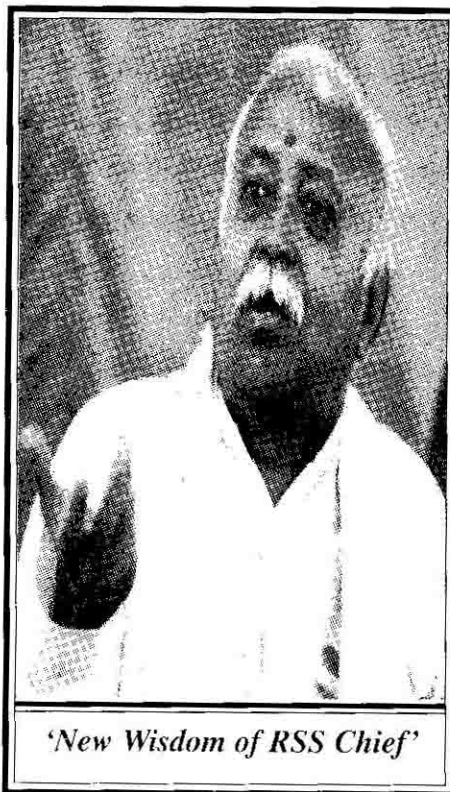
weaken the strength of Hindus in India and, at the same time, to appease Muslims," he said.... Addressing the annual Dussehra rally at Reshim Bagh ground (in Nagpur)....

"These are sinister conspiracies to mislead the Hindus through a campaign of lies and defame Hindu saints and noble citizens."

Close watchers of the RSS know the long tradition within the organization wherein the supremo gives a speech on its foundation day (that is, Dusshera) which is supposed to be a guideline to all the affiliated organizations – ranging from the parliamentary to the extra parliamentary ones. Newspapers tell us that Bhagwat basically raised three points: one, he welcomed the Ayodhya verdict and hoped that the day was not far off when they would build a 'Grand Ram Temple' at Ayodhya; two, he talked of the deteriorating situation in Kashmir and emphasised that in the coming months the focus of the *Parivar* would be on it; thirdly, he said that Hindus and terrorism are

oxymorons and whosoever is calling the Hindus terrorists is stigmatising the whole community.

Nobody can deny that Ayodhya and Kashmir are important issues and every social-



political formation will have to devise its own strategy for intervention. And looking at the differences in their world views, any truly democratic and secular intervention would be qualitatively different from what Bhagwat's boys intend to do as part of their 'nationalist' duties.

Not long ago the RSS

had devised a unique plan to tackle the Kashmir situation by suggesting to trifurcate it on religious lines – Leh for Buddhists, Jammu for Hindus and Kashmir for Muslims. It is a different matter that this divisive plan did not get any support from the rest of the polity despite the saffron dispensation holding the reins of power at the Centre.

It is not much difficult to see that the highlight of the speech was the new wisdom which has dawned on Bhagwat, that Hindus and terrorism are oxymorons. Definitely it would soothe the egos of many among the community who have no qualms in rationalising incidents like the Gujarat genocide or the Kandhmal riots or the attacks on churches or forcible separation of two adults belonging to different religious communities supposedly to defend the community's honour.

Coming to this new-found thesis which emphasises the incompatibility of Hindus with terrorism, one wishes to ask Bhagwat whether he or his

organisation has made any new discoveries as far as the religious affiliations of the first terrorist of independent India, called Nathuram Godse, is concerned, whose band of terrorists included Madanlal Pahwa, Karkare, Parchure and several others. The same Nathuram cut his political teeth in the RSS *shakhas* only and later focussed on his work on the Hindu Mahasabha front. Interestingly during his trial Nathuram formally said that he had left the RSS in 1933, but in an interview to the magazine *Frontline* in the late nineties his younger brother, Gopal Godse, who was also part of the conspiracy specifically said that none of the brothers ever left the RSS. When the reporter asked him pointedly why Nathuram 'lied' about his dissociation, pat came the reply: 'To save the organization from harassment.

It has been on record that there were five attempts on Mahatma Gandhi's life during his lifetime and the last one proved fatal. It is revealing to know that Hindu fanatics were involved in all these attempts; they were eager to eliminate the Mahatma – who, for many, was 'the biggest Hindu

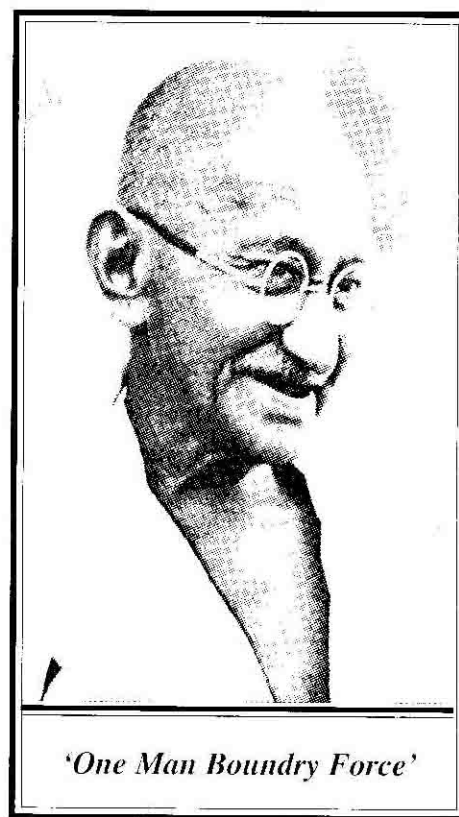
of the 20th century'.

Of course, it is possible that for many among the Hindu right who yearn to build a Hindu *Rashtra* of their dreams, the death of the Mahatma was not a terrorist act; rather it was a 'patriotic act'. It is an open secret that every year many from the Hindu Right do observe the day Nathuram was hanged as 'Martyrs Day'? And it is not a Pune-specific phenomenon where Nathuram lived.

A narco analysis of those involved in the Nanded bomb explosion (April 2006) which saw the deaths of Himanshu Panse and Rajeev Rajkondwar – both activists of the RSS/ Bajrang Dal tells us how these 'patriots of a different kind' used organized programmes on this day.

And what about Savarkar, the pioneer of the idea of Hindutva, who escaped conviction in the case of Mahatma's assassination only on

technical grounds? It is a different matter that the Kapoor Commission which was set up in the sixties to look into the conspiracy angle of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination – where many fresh witnesses to the case appeared rightly concluded that Savarkar was very much a part of that conspiracy.



And why did these fanatics kill him? Only because Gandhi was trying to practise Hinduism in his own way. And so when independence came, this frail old man – who was called 'One Man Boundary Force' by the then Governor General for singlehandedly bringing peace to

strife-torn Kolkata by resorting to fast unto death did not join the celebrations but was instead touring Noakhali to console and help people affected by the riots.

While the role played by the Hindu fanatics in Mahatma's assassination is widely known, not much has been written on the bomb blast in Shikarpur area of Karachi at the time of independence; this resulted in the deaths of two *Sangh Pracharaks*, namely, Vasudev and Prabhu Badlani. Their third accomplice was apprehended by the Pakistan Police and had to languish in the jail there for quite some time. And how came there was a bomb blast in the residential area in a house owned by one Raibahadur Tolaram which was rented by the RSS people supposedly to run tuitions for kids? ('RSS in Sindh' *Economic and Political Weekly*, July 8, 2006)

The plan, hatched by a 21-member team of RSS workers, was to organize bomb blasts in different places in Karachi and kill as many people as possible. The house served the purpose of storing bombs. Police records reveal that the explosion was so severe that the whole house came literally crumbling down. Anderson and

Damle, who have penned a monograph on the Sangh journey, *Brotherhood in Saffron*, also provide details of the incident. Perhaps Bhagwat can get a few more details of the case from Lal Krishna Advani, who was looking after the work of the Sangh in the area. It should also be investigated whether Advani was in the know of things or not?

To be very frank, one can quote a number of other examples which can help puncture Bhagwat's argument that 'Hindus cannot be terrorists'. The exposure in the Malegaon bomb blast case (September 2008) – which brought to the fore an elaborate national network of terrorists involving military officers like Lt. Col. Purohit, religious people like Swami Dayanand Pandey or for that matter Sadhvi Pragya or the likes of Dr R.P. Singh, Himani Savarker or RSS activists like Ramji Kalasangra, Aseemanand or Sunil Joshi (killed by his own people) or the actions by Sanatan Sanstha and Hindu Janjagruti Samity like putting explosives and bombs in crowded places – just goes to show that contrary to popular perceptions, Hindus can be found to be equally involved in such anti-human actions as the Islamic fundamentalists.

One need not go into the details of every incident but the point worth underlining is that terrorism cannot be the sole preserve of this or that community and also some elements in every community. Just as there are good people or bad people in every community, there are fanatics or same elements in every community.

Singling out a particular community for the ills of society or for negative traits reflects what is popularly known as a communal understanding of society. In today's multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multireligious environment where the world seems to be turning into a global village, such an outlook is definitely at variance with the growing intermingling of people, communities, cultures.

Nobody can deny that the post-9/11 developments have contributed a lot to further strengthen a warped understanding of history. The manner in which the US declared its 'War Against Terror' as a new stratagem to further its influence and gain legitimacy for its criminal actions, the entire plan effectively got reduced to stigmatising and targeting people, formations or countries owing allegiance to Islam. It was a sheer coincidence

that the BJP, an affiliated organization of the RSS, was in power at the Centre when the US rulers unleashed the 'War Against Terror'. Looking back one can say that there was deep resonance between what the Bush regime wanted and what was on offer for them here.

III

THE 'thesis of oxymoron' has shades of the concept of the Supreme Hindu Race emanating from it. In fact it can also be interpreted as an indirect admission that whereas Hindus and terrorism are incompatible with each other, terrorism easily gets with all non-Hindu communities. Definitely it is a very dangerous statement not only because it tries to denigrate every other community, it tries to pass on the blame to others. It can thus be seen as a poor attempt to deflect attention from the number of crimes committed by the Hindu fanatics.

To avoid confusion of any sort when we are discussing the crimes of the Hindu fanatics, then it should in no way be construed as being soft towards the crimes of Islamic fanatics or Christian fanatics or similar faith based fanaticisms. Fanaticism of every kind needs to be

condemned in every possible manner. In fact history is witness to the fact that religion based fanaticism has killed more innocent people than any other social catastrophe.

Surprisingly Bhagwat's speech also conveyed the deliberate conflation of two distinct terms: Hinduism and Hindutva. According to him, all those people who talk of Hindu terrorism are trying to denigrate the whole community. It cannot be denied that a few people did describe the role of Hindu fanatics in terrorist operations as 'Hindu terrorism'. But a large majority of the critics avoided describing it in this fashion and instead talked of Hindutva terrorism which seems to be a more accurate description of the phenomenon.

All those people who are not aware of the debates in the movement would not be able to gauge the big difference between Hindu terrorism and *Hindutva* terrorism. Perhaps it would be better to refer to a book by Savarkar, who is considered to be a pioneer of the Hindu right or the 'Hindu nationalist movement'. This monograph, which is named *Hindutva*, has reached classic status and lays down the guiding principles of the idea.

What does the monograph say? Its key contribution is the way in which it differentiates between Hinduism and *Hindutva*:

Here it is enough to point out that Hindutva is not identical with what is vaguely indicated by the term Hinduism. By an 'ism' it is generally meant a theory or a code more or less based on spiritual or religious dogma or system. But when we attempt to investigate into the essential significance of Hindutva, we do not primarily and certainly not mainly concern ourselves with any 'Hinduness' would have certainly been a better word than Hinduism as a near parallel to Hindutva. Hindutva embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of our Hindu race[...]. It is imperative to point out that we are by no means attempting a definition or even a description of the more limited, less satisfactory and essentially sectarian term Hinduism. (V.D.

Savarkar, *Hindutva*, Delhi: Bharti Sahitya Sadan, 1989, sixth edition, pp. 3-4)

It is imperative that before getting confused with what Bhagwat wants to convey, it would be definitely helpful if one refers to this classic monograph and understand for oneself that when we say *Hindutva* terror it does not at all mean that all those people who have deep faith in the principles of Hinduism. Just as Islam and Political Islam cannot be considered as synonymous, Hinduism and *Hindutva* cannot be measured on the same scale.

Looking at the emphasis on action as opposed to contemplation (which involves reading also in the whole *Hindutva* movement, it can easily be presumed that a large majority of those people who today owe their allegiance to the ideas of Savarkar, Hedgewar and Golwalkar and who want India to usher in Hindu Rashta, must not have bothered to even read Savarkar's monograph. And this cannot be said to be an exaggeration. There have been instances when the RSS-BJP people had to withdraw books which were published under their own aegis or withdraw articles from textbooks which they

themselves had ratified.

A news item is worth taking note of:

Mystery surrounds the sudden withdrawal of one of the 16 volumes of an official account of the Jana Sangh-BJP history, four months after it was released as part of its silver jubilee celebrations in Mumbai. The series, written by historian Makhan Lal under the supervision of senior BJP leader J.P. Mathur, carries a foreword by Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha L.K. Advani.

(*Indian Express*, May 9, 2006)

But perhaps the Orissa experience truly shows the mental abilities of the plethora of activists of the *Hindutva* brigade who needed around five years to notice 'discrepancy' in a textbook when the person incharge of the Education Department was a hardcore RSS *Pracharak* called Samir Dey himself. It was the period when the BJP was sharing power with the Biju Janata Dal.

In Indian Express (Feb 2, 2007) report on its front page, captioned 'In NDA Orissa, a

textbook equates BJP with Lashkar' the paper gave details about the manner in which a textbook on 'Indian Polity' for second-year degree students in Orissa clubbed the Lashkar-e-Taiba with the BJP. According to the report,

The chapter on the 'Existence of Terrorist Organisation' says: "Terrorist organizations create tension in the country. Communal parties like the BJP, RSS, Bajrang Dal, Hurriyat Conference and Lashkar-e-Taiba are responsible for fomenting violence... leading to the killing of hundreds in the country and especially Kashmir.

It is worth noting that the said textbook – which was written by Amarendra Mohanty and Shyama Charan Mohanty, teachers of Political Science – was taught since 2003. The matter could come to light only after a BJP worker in Salepur, about 60 km from the State capital, noticed it and lodged an FIR. And as expected, to remove the egg on its face members of the *Hindutva* brigade did a lot of things which can be bracketed as 'taking law into their hands'. □

Karnataka: Corruption and “Core Issues”



□ J. Sri Raman

Was it Oscar Wilde who talked about the English being seized by periodical fits of morality? Whether that is true or not, there is no doubt at all about the fits of public morality that periodically seize the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This political front of the Sangh Parivar is currently in the throes of a particularly severe seizure.

Behind every one of the party's frequent crusades against corruption, there are three major factors at work. First, the BJP resorts to its avowedly holy war on “corruption in high places”, whenever it finds that its “core issues” are not working. Second, the periodical campaigns are a ploy to try and perpetuate the

theory that it is “a party with a difference”. Third, the dust is raised to provide cover for its sins that are under investigation by anti-terror squads of various states.

The compulsions are clearly at work in the instant case as well. The court verdict in the Ayodhya case has failed to create an expected wave in its favour: it has, on the contrary, raised uneasy questions about a fascist offensive against secularism launched in the name of “faith”. With no major causes of a more substantive kind to espouse in Parliament and elsewhere, the party also considers the present a propitious occasion to put on a probity seeker's act again. In recent times several of its leaders have been found linked

to terrorist actions and ‘Hindutva or Saffron’ terrorism has come under scanner.

Every time, of course, BJP and its band are exposed. Bofors, on which successive governments under it failed to take any step after all the shrill campaign of years, is just one example. It is exposed this time, too in Karnataka under the regime of its own Bokanakere Siddalingappa Yeddyurappa.

The first State to provide the BJP a foothold in South India, of course, continues to suffer the consequences of the party's “core issues”. The corruption issues, now rocking the State, are making the people wonder all the more about the wisdom of their vote in 2008.

As for the “core issues”, well-known activist Harsh Mander had this to say about the havoc wrought by the moral brigades of the Parivar, particularly in Mangalore and around, in February 2010: “In the picturesque coastal regions of Karnataka, fear has become a dominant motif of everyday life. A full year has passed since the attack on women in a pub in Mangalore on January 24, 2009 briefly attracted national outrage. A range of self-styled vigilante groups, with tacit support of the police and state administration, continue to dominate social life in the region, as they peremptorily dictate and enforce what they regard to be permissible social conduct...”

Mander added: “I encountered in coastal Karnataka a society almost as bitterly divided as in Gujarat. Unlike in Gujarat, there is no carnage here. Only everyday living weighed low by the burdens of hate and fear.”

The Yeddyurappa government leaves no doubt about its loyalty to the Parivar. The Chief Minister was represented by his Medical

Education Minister at a public function, in Bylakuppee organised in April by Bharat-Tibet Sahayog Manch to felicitate the former supremo of the Rashtriya Swaymsevak Sangh (RSS), Kuppahalli Sitaramayya Sudarshan, who has recently set a new low in public discourse with his unprintable statements about Congress President Sonia Gandhi. Indresh Kumar, linked by investigative agencies to the Ajmer blast of 2007, was also present.

All this is combined with campaigns of “cultural nationalism”, such as the one against a place in school textbooks for Tipu Sultan, the Tiger of Mysore and an 18th-century fighter against British colonialism. The Sound and Light programme at the Mysore Palace, inaugurated by Yeddyurappa last year, describes Tipu as a “villain”.

What seems a more crucial issue to the common man, however, is the new high being set by the regime of the holier-than-thou BJP in corruption of a phenomenal scale. The party and the media friendly to it are now

talking of the number of zeroes in the figures involved in a current issue paralysing Parliament at the taxpayers’ cost. At least comparable is the figure involved in the controversy that erupted last year and has continued to date over the illegal export of iron ore.

The Chief Minister told the State Assembly that, between 2000 and 2010, over 30 million tonnes of iron ore was illegally mined and exported from the State. The Opposition was quick to call it the “scam of the century”, involving up to Rs.600 billion by their reckoning.

The Bellary brothers or the Reddy brothers, the mining moghuls, were supposed to be in some trouble last year after they raised the banner of revolt against Yeddyurappa. They are now among the Chief Minister’s close confidants and were his trouble-shooters, what with all that money at their command, during the recent political crisis sparked off by the rebellion of several party legislators.

Amidst the clamour by the party and its allies at the national level against “corruption

in high places", the Chief Minister himself has become the target of charges yet to be answered. Especially serious is the allegation that he has been instrumental in allotting public land to a company floated by his son in a prime industrial hub of Bangalore. It is also charged that State-owned land in and around South India's Silicon Valley has been de-notified and allotted to members of Yeddyurappa's family.

Complaints are commonly heard that Yeddyurappa is letting his sons, B. Y. Raghavendra and B. Y. Vijayendra, as well as his political favourites like Shobha Karandlaje and V. Somanna, have a free run in the State administration. The two sons, in particular, have been functioning as the de facto Home Minister — so say many in the police and other departments, according to a recent report.

Quite a few ministers have come under a cloud too. Recently, Education Minister Ramachandra Gowda was forced to quit after gross irregularities were revealed in his recruitment of over 300

employees, including nurses, in government-run hospitals and as laboratory technicians in medical colleges.

Industries Minister Katta Subramanya Naidu has been charged with holding de-notified land in order to favour friends. In a case that caught even wider public attention, Food and Civil Supplies Minister Haratal Halappa had to quit in May after being accused of raping his friend's wife. Religious Endowments Minister S. N. Krishnaiah Setty was dropped after allegations of irregularities in the purchase and sale of land to the government-run Karnataka Housing Board.

All of Yeddyurappa's well-advertised visits to various temples and numerology (he has changed the middle letter in his name from 'i' to 'y') have not helped refurbish his party's image either in the State or at the national level.

Karnataka which was once BJP's door to the South has become a major embarrassment. Its Chief Minister has been found guilty of cronyism and the party at the

centre finds it difficult to defend him as also to justify its high decible campaign against Prime Minister Manmohan Singh about 2 G scam though he has already forced A.Raja, the Telecom Minister to resign.

The BJP is further embarrassed as Yeddyurappa is reluctant to resign. He is in fact threatening to bring down the government if he is forced to resign. The BJP chief Gadkari has gone to Nagpur to secure the support of RSS for persuading him to resign and not work against his successor. He has already been given the option to name his successor. The latest position is that he has coerced the BJP high command to reconcile to his continuation. The excuse is that he has set up a commission of inquiry to investigate land grab during the last decade. This has been challenger by the Lokayukta.



BJP's Hypocrisy



□ *Devendra Upadhyay*

BJP leaders' untiringly repeat that their party is different in character that its actions reflect transparent integrity. However some of the party leaders assert that there is nothing wrong in protecting the mining mafia of Bellary, it has only ended the Congress hold over the area. This of course, is the revelation of its being different and transparent.

The hypocrisy has been underlined in Jharkhand where they have fallen at the feet of Shibu Soren whose inclusion in UPA-I ministry they had violently opposed and who has more recently given a jolt to the party by defying its whip in the Lok Sabha vote. Not only that, they kept the BJP Jharkhand president Raghuvar Das as well as senior leader Yashwant Sinha in the dark about the deal-

making to capture power in the state.

Not only was the leader of party in the assembly ignored, party chief Gadkari's confidant Ajay Sancheti even asked him to resign as leader of the BJP assembly party. Sancheti is an ordinary member of the BJP national executive but he undertook this unconstitutional action because he is close to Gadkari. This has been revealed by none other than Raghubar Das himself.

Arjun Munda, the Chief Minister in the first BJP government and now leader of Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) said it is clear that this government has been formed at the behest of some industrialists and in this game lot of black money was invested. K.N. Tripathi, deputy leader of Congress legislative party has

opined that the BJP kept the state politically unstable just for these deals. Can this government formed to loot and plunder the mines in the state will ever be able to claim being popular and constitutional?

It is noteworthy that at the time of the formation of Munda government the BJP spokesman Prakash Javdekar had claimed that the government had been formed not at the instance of party high command but with people's mandate. Can he say the same thing now as the entire game has been played at the instance of the BJP president. Indeed, the developments of last few months show that the whole drama was enacted to somehow capture Chief Ministership in this mineral rich state. How can the BJP assertion that several party leaders were opposed to having a deal with JMM? If it is so why

was the government formed? In the 81 member Assembly BJP has only 18 members and yet it has formed a government even though there was no pre-election alliance.

According to party sources party Chief Gadkari gave the responsibility of successfully enacting this farce to his predecessor Rajnath Singh who has no other responsibility and was free for this job. He so skillfully played the game that the senior leadership had to bow before him.

BJP won over Hemant Soren, the son of Shibu Soren, by making him Deputy Chief Minister. The whole game was started by winning over all those JMM legislators who had earlier opposed joining hand with BJP. That was the first step in operation Jharkhand and it was taken quietly. Thereafter Shibu and Hemant were given the satisfaction of high offices in government. Earlier too BJP had tried to play the son against father. This time too the effort was the same but it did not succeed. At that time if Congress had taken the initiative it would have succeeded by sharing power with Shibu Soren but

Congress wisely kept away.

The BJP government that has been formed is supported by JMM (Jharkhand Mukti Moreha), AJSU (All Jharkhand Students, Union) and some independents. The party itself is not sure how long this combination will be stable and when will cleavages emerge. It however is of no consequence to them. They have to once capture power and please the industrialists with mining interests. Like Ballary brothers they hope to stabilise this government too like the Yeddyurappa government in Karnatak. For Shibu Soren's satisfaction he has been awarded the ministerial positions as convenor of the alliance. Coming months will show how this reward works.

JVM president Babulal Marandi has targeted Hemant Soren, the Deputy Chief Minister. How has he bought land in Dhanbad in contravention of SPI-CNT Act? Besides, several of his family members are owners of land in various districts of the state.

This only shows how the son of Shibu Soren is using power for personal gain. It is the same Hemant who had refused

to relinquish his assembly seat for his father. If such are the relations between father and son, how long will there be peace in the state government only time will tell. The price for this will be paid neither by BJP nor this father son duo but the people of the state.

The BJP-led government is experimenting in making and breaking of governments. Three months ago BJP had withdrawn support from Shibu Soren dispensation. How long will this sustain Marandi is so nervous that he took weeks to complete ministry formation. That too after the Governor M.D.H. Farooq reminded him of his responsibility in this regard.

This BJP government stands on the support of a variety of legislature parties i.e., 18 of JMM, 2 from JD (U), AJSLL's 5 and 2 independents. The same combination was the base of the government from which BJP had withdrawn support. On what principles or unprincipled consideration has the Marandi government been supported? This shows how different a political party BJP is and how principled and transparent its actions.

□

Forgetting Facts

□ **T. K. Rajalakshmi**

The compromise judgment of the Allahabad High Court, for all its merits and attempts to achieve communal amity, is perceived as a setback for the basic tenets of historical inquiry and precision. Social scientists of all hues have reacted with dismay to the dominance of faith and belief over scientific fact and historicity.

While a section of the political class and the intelligentsia genuinely believes that it is time to move on and let the higher judiciary take up the matter if need be, historians and students of history wonder what happened to all the evidence painstakingly collected in the national interest by leading historians and archaeologists of the country.

One of them, the archaeologist Suraj Bhan, who is no more, had noted the strain the dispute had created, before the demolition, and attempted, purely voluntarily, to set the record straight, not only to maintain communal amity but to protect academic integrity. In 1991, two significant reports, one in March and the other in May, were written with the sole objective of presenting to the nation information relating to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue.

The May report, titled "Ramjanambhoomi-Babri Masjid issue: A preliminary study of the archaeological evidence", was by Suraj Bhan, who was Professor of Archaeology in the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology

at Kurukshetra University in Haryana. This was an interim report, which was submitted to the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).

The Home Ministry had assigned it the task of authenticating the documents submitted by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the All India Babri Masjid Action Committee (AIBMAC). Suraj Bhan made these observations on the basis of the excavations done by Professor B.B. Lal during 1975-80, his own study of the archaeological remains at Ayodhya, and evidence collected in 1969-70.

"There is nothing wrong in looking for a kernel of truth in the literary tradition of the Ramayana. But what is

necessary for a scientific methodology is to build a reasonable hypothesis about the structured entity which must have been objectively in existence in the past. The metaphor of kernel would not encourage the scientist to critically examine either the evidence buried in the texts or the material evidence collected through excavations in order to identify the structure of relationship embodied in the evidence.

Merely locating the names of personages and places in the time frame does not suffice for this purpose. It will only confirm the vague understanding of history we have unconsciously imbibed through what is called common sense....

What has limited the significance of B.B. Lal's attempt is the vague notion of history that is implicit in his approach... On account of the limitations of Professor B.B. Lal's approach mentioned above, we cannot accept his view that archaeological evidence proved the historicity of Ram as a personage who lived at the site

where the present day Ayodhya is located during the period of early NBP [northern black polished] ware (circa 700 B.C.) or that he was born at the place where Babri Masjid today stands."

The second report, titled "Ramjanmabhumi Babri Masjid - A Historians' Report to the Nation", was authored by historians R.S. Sharma, M. Athar Ali, D.N. Jha and Suraj Bhan. R.S. Sharma and D.N. Jha were professors of History at the University of Delhi (Sharma was also the first Chairman of the ICHR) and Athar Ali was Professor of History at Aligarh Muslim University.

That the dispute whether a Ram temple existed at the site of the Babri Masjid was being left entirely to the litigants and had not involved historians of any standing worried the four historians. They approached the government to consider the views of independent historians and also requested that archaeological and textual evidence in possession with government organisations such as the Archaeological Survey of

India (ASI) be made available to them.

While the AIBMAC agreed to abide by the findings of an independent group of historians, the VHP did not accept it. The government maintained a tactical silence all along. Undeterred, the four historians embarked on the project on their own in the national interest as they felt that people had a right to know the historical facts.

The very first thing they noted was that the VHP had been unable to cite any ancient Sanskrit text in support of its claim that there was an ancient Hindu belief that a particular spot in Ayodhya was the Ram Janmasthan (birth place of Ram).

The report concluded, after looking at various pieces of textual and archaeological evidence, including 'Tulsidas' Ramcharitamanas, that no evidence existed in the texts of any veneration being attached to any spot in Ayodhya before the 16th century (and indeed before the 18th century) for being the

birth place of Ram and that there were no grounds for supposing that a Ram temple or any temple existed at the site where the Babri Masjid was built in 1528-29.

Their conclusion rested on an examination of the archaeological evidence as well as the contemporary inscriptions on the mosque. They concluded that the legend that the Babri Masjid occupied the site of Ram's birth did not arise until the 18th century and that a temple was destroyed to build the mosque was not asserted until the beginning of the 19th century. They held that the full-blown legend of the destruction of a temple that stood at the site of Ram's birth and at Sita ki Rasoi came as late as the 1850s.

"Since then, what we get is merely the progressive reconstruction of 'imagined history' based on faith," noted the four historians in their report to the nation. After examining the inconsistencies in the VHP claim based on the Ayodhya Mahatmya (the merits of visiting Ayodhya) given in the Skanda Purana, the

core of which was not compiled earlier than the 16th century, the historians noted:

"In spite of these various inconsistencies, even if we accept the location of the birth place of Rama as given in the Ayodhya Mahatmya, it does not tally with the site of the Babri Masjid... according to Hindu belief as given in the Ayodhya Mahatmya of the Skanda Purana, the birth place of Rama cannot be located on the site where the Babri Masjid stands.

It is argued by the experts of the VHP that the location of the Ram Janmabhumi is given on the basis of solar directions and cannot be determined through the use of the compass. But even if we take solar directions into account, the Janmabhumi of the Skanda Purana cannot be located on the site of the Babri Masjid. The various versions of Ayodhya Mahatmya seem to have been prepared towards the end of the 18th century or in the beginning of the 19th; even as late as that the birth place was not considered to be important. It is

significant that the Janmasthan is not mentioned even once in any itinerary of pilgrimage given in the Mahatmya."

The historians also relied on the most primary source of recorded historical evidence, the Persian inscriptions on the mosque. Presenting a full translation of the inscriptions, the historians observed that the contemporaneity of the inscriptions was shown by their text and date, and their accuracy was established by the fact that Mir Baqi finds mention in Babur's memoirs as the governor of Awadh or Ayodhya at exactly the same time. The report noted:

"These fairly long inscriptions show that the construction of the Babri Masjid was completed in 1528-29. But nowhere is any hint given in them that the edifice was built after destroying a temple or upon the site of a temple. If one accepts for the purpose of argument that there was a temple at the site, and the builder of the mosque (Mir Baqi) destroyed it to build a mosque, one has to answer why at all should all reference to

this fact be omitted in the foundation inscriptions.

Surely, had Mir Baqi destroyed a temple, he would have deemed it a meritorious deed; and what would have been more natural than that he should get this act recorded along with that of the building of the mosque to add to his religious reputation. That he did not get any such act recorded surely means that he had in fact not destroyed any temple, and so found no reason to record something that had not happened."

Expressing surprise at Tulsidas' Ramcharitamanas also not mentioning the desecration of a temple at the site of the mosque, the historians wrote: "Within fifty years or so of the construction of the Babri Masjid, Tulsidas composed in 1575-76 his celebrated *Ramcharitamanas*, the most fervent exposition of the Ramayana story in Avadhi. Is it possible to believe that Tulsidas would not have given vent to heart-rending grief had the very birth site of his Lord been ravaged, its temple razed to the

ground and a mosque erected at that place? His silence can only mean that he knew of no such scandal; and given his attachment to Rama and Ayodhya, this must mean that no such event had in fact taken place. Tulsidas, on the contrary, suggests that it was not Ayodhya but Prayag that was to him the principal place of pilgrimage (tirath raj); and so no tradition of the veneration of any spot as that of Rama's birth at Ayodhya had yet taken shape."

The historians added that even Abul Fazl, in his *A'in-i-Akbari*, completed in 1598, wrote about Ayodhya being the "residence of Ramachandra, who in the Treta age combined in his own person both the spiritual supremacy and the kingly office" but did not confine Ram's place of birth to the existing town of Ayodhya, let alone the site occupied by the Babri Masjid. "Had such tradition existed, Abul Fazl would surely have mentioned it, because he does mention the tradition that two Jewish prophets lie buried at Ayodhya," they noted in their report.

As for the black pillar bases that were used to vouch for the existence of a temple, the historians noted, after examining many records, including those of art historians, that there was nothing to show that "the pillar bases were remains of a local temple of which they formed an integral part in the beginning and the mosque was erected over them".

In his own report to the ICHR, Suraj Bhan wrote of the pillars: "This is a wild hypothesis not backed by any material evidence and is actually negated by the factual position easily verifiable from the existing structure of the Babri Masjid. The stone pillars are, in fact, embedded at the arched entrances in the massive walls of the mosque and stand at the floor level on the foundation walls constructed for the big building. Only those who have failed to understand the architectural plan of the building and wilfully ignore the indisputable factual position will insist on seeing these stone pillars as *in situ*. Since black stone pillars are relatively short and slender, they cannot be load

bearing. In fact, their placement at the arched entrances and the colour contrast they offer as also the carvings on them suggest that they have been used only as decorative pieces and are not architecturally functional beyond this decorative purpose. Furthermore, the placement of the pillars fits in the plan of the mosque and not that of a Hindu temple."

The September 30 judgment has evinced strong reactions from a cross-section of historians and archaeologists. On behalf of the Safdar Hashmi

Memorial Trust, 62 academics, including Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, D.N. Jha, K.M. Shrimali, K.N. Panikkar, Utsa Patnaik, Shireen Moosvi, Amiya Kumar Bagchi, Suvira Jaiswal and Arjun Dev, have demanded that the notebooks, artefacts and other material evidence relating to the ASI's excavation at the site be made available for scrutiny by scholars, historians and archaeologists.

First of all, the view that the Babri Masjid was built on the site of a Hindu temple—which has been maintained by two of the

three judges who gave the verdict, does not take into account all the evidence turned up by the ASI's own excavations. The presence of animal bones throughout and the use of "surkhi" (made from powdered burnt bricks) and lime mortar (all characteristics of Muslim presence) rule out the possibility of a Hindu temple having been there beneath the mosque. The judgment, the academics said, had raised serious concerns about the way history, reason and secular values, which much of rational India shared, had been treated.

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Letters to the Editor

Kashmir Diehards

The issue in Kashmir is not a rebellion, dispute or communal tangle, but of few die-hard separatists taking up Pakistan's slogan that status of Kashmir was in dispute. According to Pakistan even the partition was questionable. Any solution can be in dispute. If one does not wish to abide by agreements already made. The Indian information is that few infiltrators act as agents provocateurs and excite the impressionable youngsters when the general public is keen to carry on their normal work and commerce like the rest of the population of India under a welfare oriented

democratic humanist regime of the integrationist Congress party. The courage shown by Dr. Manmohan Singh in desiring the happiness of all Indian citizens is entirely commendable.

Every effort should be made to guard the frontiers and border security and police should be strengthened to check infiltration. The police evidently has become in-effective and needs through training and alignment with the state of his choice at least for the immediate future. The international border and the military spread in the interior of J and K should be according to what is customary

in border states of India. The disease of corruption must be attended to and police or military officials should not remain in any particular station for more than two years. The district wise actions for development carry more weight with the population than the grand plans for the entire region.

Pacification should not require army with special powers.

J.N.Nanda,
(*Director, Zaheer Science Foundation*
4, Udyan Marg, New Delhi
— 110 001.)

□

The Ayodhya Verdict: A Historian's Perspective

□ **Romila Thapar**

It has annulled respect for history and seeks to replace it with religious faith.

The verdict is a political judgment and reflects a decision which could as well have been taken by the state years ago. Its focus is on the possession of land and building a new temple to replace the destroyed mosque. The problem was entangled in contemporary politics involving religious identities but also claimed to be based on historical evidence. This latter aspect has been invoked but subsequently set aside in the judgment.

The court has declared that a particular spot is where a divine or semi-divine person was born and where a new

temple is to be built to commemorate the birth. This is in response to an appeal by Hindu faith and belief.



The author is a distinguished historian of early India. She enjoys international reputation for her work on Ancient India.

Given the absence of evidence in support of the claim,

such a verdict is not what one expects from a court of law. Hindus deeply revere Rama as a deity but can this support a legal decision on claims to a birth-place, possession of land and the deliberate destruction of a major historical monument to assist in acquiring the land?

The verdict claims that there was a temple of the 12th Century AD at the site which was destroyed to build the mosque — hence the legitimacy of building a new temple.

The excavations of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and its readings have been fully accepted even though these have been strongly disputed

by other archaeologists and historians. Since this is a

A mosque built almost 500 years ago and which was part of our cultural heritage was destroyed wilfully by a mob urged on by a political leadership. There is no mention in the summary of the verdict that this act of wanton destruction, and a crime against our heritage, should be condemned.

matter of professional expertise on which there was a sharp difference of opinion the categorical acceptance of the one point of view, and that too in a simplistic manner, does little to build confidence in the verdict.

One judge stated that he did not delve into the historical aspect since he was not a historian but went to say that history and archaeology were not absolutely essential to decide these suits! Yet what are at issue are the historicity of the claims and the historical structures of the past one millennium.

A mosque built almost 500 years ago and which was part of our cultural heritage was destroyed wilfully by a mob urged on by a political leadership. There is no mention in the summary of the verdict that this act of wanton destruction, and a crime against our heritage, should be condemned. The new temple

will have its sanctum - the presumed birth place of Rama in the area of the debris of the mosque. Whereas the destruction of the supposed temple is condemned and becomes the justification for building a new temple, the destruction of the mosque is not, perhaps by placing it conveniently outside the purview of the case.

The verdict has created a precedent in the court of law that land can be claimed by declaring it to be the birth place of a divine or semi-divine being worshipped by a group that defines itself as a community. There will now be many such janmasthans wherever appropriate property can be found or a required dispute manufactured.

Since the deliberate destruction of historical monuments has not been condemned what is to stop people from continuing to destroy others? The legislation

of 1993 against changing the status of places of worship has been, as we have seen in recent years, quite ineffective.

What happened in history, happened. It cannot be changed. But we can learn to understand what happened in its fuller context and strive to look at it on the basis of reliable evidence. We cannot change the past to justify the politics of the present. *The verdict has annulled respect for history and seeks to replace history with religious faith. True reconciliation can only come when there is confidence that the law in this country bases itself not just on faith and belief, but on evidence.*



Defence of secularism against communalism brought

Indira Gandhi and Subhadra Joshi together

AN UNMITIGATED TRAGEDY



□ ***Subhadra Joshi***

Like a host of other persons who came into personal contact with Indiraji at one time or the other in their life, I also find it hard to believe that Indiraji is no more. It is only with terrible anguish and a wrench in the heart that one can attempt to reconcile oneself to the harsh and cruel reality that she has already joined the ranks of Martyrs who have laid down their precious lives in the cause of the country, for upholding those cherished values and ideals which give meaning and substance to human life on the earth.

My association with Indiraji dates back to the terrible holocaust of communal

strife following the partition of India in 1947. This association soon matured into close companionship with mutual regard, admiration and genuine affection for each other in the course of a hard, bitter struggle against communal monster which had raised its ugly head in the wake of the partition.

I met her for the first time in a meeting of social workers in the Town Hall of Delhi convened for discussing communal situation in the walled city. After the meeting she met me separately and told me that Gandhiji had mentioned my name to her as one who was working for communal harmony and advised her to take a hand in that work.

A brief account of the struggle we were waging was sufficient for her to make up her mind to join the struggle. Beginning with a couple of hours work with us in the riot torn areas of the city, the sight of misery and destruction wrought upon the Muslim Minority and the privations being undergone by the evacuees from Pakistan, made her change her mind.

Soon she threw herself, heart and soul, into the work and went about on foot in the mohallas of the walled city assisting social workers like me in providing material relief to the suffering people. Often she was with us for 12 hours at a stretch forgetting all her personal and domestic obligations including the

looking after of her small child, Sanjay.

Her simple and unassuming nature would be evident from the fact that she never allowed herself to be accompanied by any security guard. At times she even picked me up from my residence in her jeep. The persistence, genuineness of the anguish she felt at the suffering on the victims of partition, her abhorrence of communal ideology and her unsparing toil and persistence in strengthening the anti-communal campaign launched by us under the auspices of a non-party organization known as Shanti Dal in those days, soon attracted hundreds of peace-loving citizens. An army of social workers belonging to various secular parties joined the movement.

Knowing her intimately, I can say that, contrary to what many of her critics and adversaries assume, Indiraji did not entertain any ambition, much less political ambition, in life. Left to her she would have preferred to remain a silent social and constructive worker engaging

herself in alleviating the sufferings of the common people.

Back in 1954, for example, when as President of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee I tried to persuade her to attend and speak at a public function in Delhi, and

Large-hearted, intensely patriotic and human, endowed with rare qualities of courage, determination and initiative in matters both national and international, having a clear vision of a secular democratic India as inherited from the architect of modern India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, that was Indiraji.

failing in that, wrote a sort of personal protest note to her. She had, a few days back, returned from a visit to the Soviet Union in company with Panditji. With her usual frankness and unsimulated humility and regard for co-workers she sent back a six-page explanatory letter from which I quote:

“As you know that I am not only completely devoid of any

kind of ambition but I have a positive horror of the cheap kind of publicity that is becoming rather prevalent in our country. I found that the only way of avoiding it was not to go to public functions. That is the only reason for my not wanting to address any meetings and especially political ones. I have by mistake got mixed up with the AICC subcommittee but am now sending in my resignation. Indeed I want to keep clear away from politics of any kind.”

I know it for certain that it was only at the insistence of the top Congress leadership of that period, who had correctly discerned in her the qualities of leadership and vision inherited, from her illustrious forebears, that she at last allowed herself virtually to be dragged into politics. I am also certain that she could not have been persuaded to give up her resolve to remain a silent worker, had she not been convinced as much by the Congress leadership as by her close associates and co-workers that her active participation in politics would be in the best interest of the country.

One could quarrel with her on specific issues as I often did. But one could always be sure that one would always have her willing ear for any suggestion, idea or advice sincerely offered in the interest of the country.

Large-hearted, intensely patriotic and human, endowed with rare qualities of courage, determination and initiative in matters both national and international, having a clear vision of a secular democratic India as inherited from the architect of modern India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, that was Indiraji.

Indiraji's departure from our midst at this critical juncture of our history is an unmitigated tragedy

not only for us but also for the entire peace-loving mankind. It is a strange, perhaps symbolic coincidence, that her precious life has been claimed at a

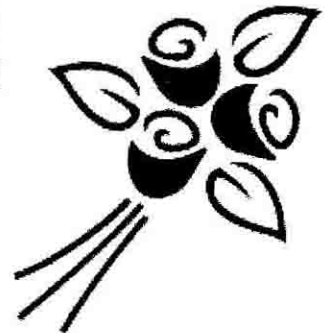
somewhat similar critical period of our history by the same monster of communalism and religious fanaticism that snatched away

of 5, Tees January Marg in 1948: gave the nation the courage and the strength to defeat the onslaught of communalism against our newly acquired freedom.

Let us afresh derive the same strength and the courage from the precious blood shed on the lawns of No.1, Safadarjung Road to decisively defeat the monsters of communal hatred and religious fanaticism, which constitute the main weapon with which external forces inimical to the policies of peace, non-alignment and independent economic development seek to destabilize and dismember our dear Motherland.



from us the father of the Nation, Mahatma Gnadhi at whose behest she had flung herself against communal forces. The precious blood that was shed on the lawns



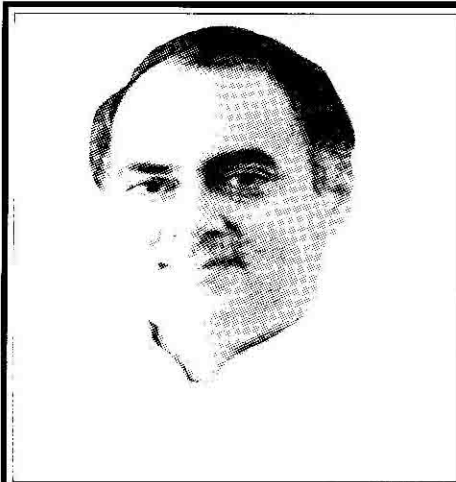
Text of the Radio Talk by Mrs. Subhadra Joshi on November 7, 1984

The Vision Of Jawaharlal Nehru

□ **Rajiv Gandhi**

Jawaharlal Nehru's was a vision breathtaking in its sweep and perspective. It was the vision of a historian, modernist, philosopher, person of action, and statesman. It was the vision of a humanist endowed with deep perception and a sparkling intellect. It was rooted in reality – in the reality of history, Indian tradition, scientific progress and in the reality of the times.

A strong underpinning of history characterizes the writings and speeches of Jawaharlal Nehru. Time and again, Jawaharlal Nehru went back to history to validate his understanding of the present and his vision of the future. The roots of the present to a very large extent, he felt, lay in the past. As he put it so lucidly in his *Discovery of India*:



During the Nehru centenary year the then PM Rajiv Gandhi paying a tribute to Jawaharlal said, long before India became free, Jawaharlal Nehru had visualised an India which would follow the path of democracy, socialism, secularism, and non-alignment. The path visualised by Jawaharlal Nehru was a path that he chose through his deep understanding of the history and aspirations of India and her people.

The past becomes something that leads up to the present, the moment of action; the future something that flows from it and all three are intrinsically intertwined and interrelated.

While not a professional historian, he had a very deep understanding of and feel for the subject. His appreciation of the relationship of the past with the present and the future added depth to his thought and anchored it firmly in reality and time. His knowledge and understanding of India and her history helped him appreciate better that peculiar feature of Indian civilization and culture

which gave India her strength. What made India different from other civilisations, he felt, was its capacity to absorb, assimilate, and synthesise different influences. This capacity to synthesise gave India her identity and unity. It also gave India her strength.

Nehru was of the view that when receptivity to outside influences and their assimilation decreased, India became weak. The capacity to accept outside influences with self confidence, without fear of being overwhelmed, the capacity to absorb other cultures without losing our Indianness, was to Jawaharlal Nehru our most precious heritage. This was the basic strength of India. This excluded any sectarian attitude and parochial loyalty.

Nehru saw the India of tomorrow as an India free from narrow exclusivism. It would absorb the best of all cultures and points of view, assimilate them with its own rich traditions and create something

that was new and yet suited to the genius of the Indian people.



Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru

With his strong faith in the assimilative capacity of India, Jawaharlal Nehru

visualized a secular India where all faiths and religions would be treated with equal respect. To him, secularism was not a non-religious or irreligious concept. It was on the other hand, a secularism based on the flowering and flourishing of all religions in the country, on the concept of Sarva Dharma Sambhav. This was a secularism suited to the psyche of the Indian people. It was a secularism acceptable to India where numerous religious movements had blossomed and which has an assimilative tradition of a thousand years.

The teachings of Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi and the sages who gave to India the message of peace and brotherhood played a very important part in the evolution of Jawaharlal Nehru's thought. His was an unwavering belief in tolerance and in nonviolence.

This was the creed of the freedom struggle which continues to play a crucially significant role in the

building of free India. Jawaharlal Nehru described tolerance as a state of mind. About violence he said:

I hate violence and consider it an abomination. I seek, therefore, a more enduring and peaceful system from which the roots of violence have been removed and where hatred shrivels up and yields place to nobler feelings.

At Queen Elizabeth's Coronation, when the other guests left, Jawaharlal Nehru and Winston Churchill were advertantly left back together Churchill turned to Nehru and said, "Isn't it strange, Prime Minister, that two people who so hate each other should be thrown together like this?" Nehru replied: "But, Prime Minister, we never hated you." Churchill said, "I did, I did." Later, that same evening at dinner Churchill said, "Here is a man who has conquered both hatred and fear." Jawaharlal Nehru amalgamated the Indian perception of nonviolence and

tolerance with the Western concepts of liberty, equality and justice, and this to a large extent was the basis of India becoming a democratic, secular, socialist and non-aligned republic.

Jawaharlal Nehru was a great democrat. His contribution in laying the firm foundation of India's democracy and democratic institutions was a crucial one. In the formative years of our nationhood, he towered over India like a colossus and yet he never brooked the thought of even anything remotely akin to dictatorship. A Constitution which guarantees every citizen freedom; a Parliament which represents the voice of the people; a multiparty system which enriches democracy; and independent judiciary which affirms our faith in impartial dispensing of justice; a free press which chastise and rebukes the government – all these institutions owe a lot to the caring hand of Jawaharlal Nehru and his vision of democratic India.

With his respect for the dignity of the human being, Jawaharlal Nehru was a firm adherent of the democratic system. Intellectually too, he was able to identify himself with the democratic way. Of democracy he said: "It involves certain contemplative tendencies and a certain inquisitive search for truth, a search for, let us say, the right thing." A believer in political dialogue, he concentrated on principles, ideas and programmes, and lifting debate well above personal differences. His attempt was always to convince, persuade and cajole, and not to impose upon, demands that would be made by democracy in terms of attitudes and behaviour of the people. He said:

Parliamentary democracy demands many virtues. It demands, of course, ability. It demands a certain devotion to work. But it demands also a large measure of cooperation, of self-discipline, of restraint.

Democracy to be able

to sustain itself, Nehru felt, must be meaningful to the masses of her people. His concern for the masses and the poor led him to socialism. He was of the view that socialism would not only help the poor to secure economic betterment, but also achieve a fuller and more satisfying life. Knowledge and standards of education, health and culture would be enlarged. Jawaharlal Nehru, despite all his cares of office, had that rare quality of devoting time and attention to individual problems. Socialism, he felt, would help to wipe the tears from the eyes of the poorest of the poor and give to the poor security in the present and hope for the future.

The poverty of India had a deep and lasting effect on Nehru. Even while engaged in the struggle for India's freedom, he was deeply conscious that independence, while important in itself, was even more important because, it would open the possibility for social and economic change. The picture of Indian poverty was forever embedded in his mind's eye. In

a moving passage in his autobiography. He said:

They were in miserable rags, men and women, but their faces were full of excitement and their eyes glistened and seemed to expect strange happenings which would, as if by a miracle, put an end to their long misery.

They showered their affection on us and looked on us with loving and hopeful eyes, as if we were the bearers of good tidings, the guides who were to lead them to the Promised Land. Looking at them and their misery and overflowing gratuities, I was filled with shame and sorrow – shame at my own easygoing and comfortable life and our petty politics of the city which ignored this vast multitude of semi-naked sons and daughters of India, sorrow at the degradation and overwhelming poverty of India. A new picture of India seemed to rise before me, naked, starving, crushed, and utterly miserable. And their

faith in us, casual visitors from the distant city, embarrassed me and filled me with a new responsibility that frightened me.

With his firm commitment to lifting India and her millions out of poverty through the path of socialism, Jawaharlal Nehru also stressed the importance of cultivating a scientific temper and applying technology to development. He also stressed self-reliance and planning as answers to India's poverty. He said:

Politics led me into economics and this led me invariably to science and a scientific approach to all our problems and to life itself. It is science alone that can solve these problems of hunger and poverty, of insanitation and illiteracy, of superstition in customs and traditions, of vast resources running to waste, of a rich country inhabited by starving people.

In the international sphere, Jawaharlal Nehru

visualised and strove for a world free from strife, where the human being was free and could live with dignity. The principles of peaceful co-existence which owed their formulation to very large extent to Nehru were rooted in India's past in the teachings of the sages, in Mahatma Gandhi's message of non-violence, as well as in the reality of the times.

In a world torn asunder by Power blocs and the threat of a nuclear holocaust looming large over the horizon, the future of humankind seemed, at best, uncertain. The message of peaceful co-existence was a voice of sanity in a world poised on the brink of self-destruction.

The concept of non-alignment gave to international politics, a third force, which stood apart from the two power blocs and gradually gained in strength, fortified by the hopes and aspirations of millions of peace loving peoples all over the world. The Non-Aligned Movement became an important

force throwing its weight behind efforts to defuse tensions before the critical flash point was reached.

Jawaharlal Nehru's firm belief in the dignity of the human being conditioned his perception of international affairs. In a world where the oppressed peoples were beginning to throw off the yoke of colonialism, India stood by the freedom movements and the cause of human dignity. Just as colonialism and the spirit of human dignity were antithetical, so was apartheid and human dignity.

Under the stewardship of Jawaharlal Nehru, India was in the forefront of denouncing racialism and demanding stringent measures to isolate the racist regime. India's strong support to freedom movements and the struggle against apartheid were concrete steps to help create a world where the human being was free and could live a life of dignity.

Democracy, socialism, and non-alignment are the pillars

of our nationhood. These lofty principles have moulded our policies and actions over the years. Our adherence to these principles has added to our strength and also earned for us respect in the comity of nations. Long before India became free, Jawaharlal Nehru had visualised an India which would follow the path of democracy, socialism, secularism, and non-alignment. The path visualised by Jawaharlal Nehru was a path that he chose through his deep understanding of the history and aspirations of India and her people. The image of India that Nehru visualized was the image that emerged from the collective wisdom of the Indian people. It is an image of a strong India and a compassionate India, whose people would be free and would live their lives with dignity and a sense of purpose. Time has not dulled this image. It has instead grown sharper over the years increasing in relevance and beckoning us to ever greater endeavours.

Courtesy: A Centenary Tribute □

MAULANA'S PRESCIENCE

***“Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
saw the future of Pakistan and
Muslims with brutal clarity”***



□ **Ashok V. Desai**

In April 1946, the Cabinet Mission was holding consultations with Indian leaders about the possible shape of independence. Jinnah was insistent on Partition; Gandhi wanted to pay any price to prevent Partition, but the other Congress leaders, who would have to run the government, balked at the price Jinnah was asking for staying within India. At that time, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad gave an interview to an Urdu magazine of (then Indian) Lahore, *Chattan*. It was soon overtaken by events and forgotten. But it is remarkable for its prescience.

When asked whether he did not think Pakistan had become inevitable, Azad replied that the creation of Pakistan

would solve no problem. The cherished goal of a Muslim was to spread Islam; if Muslims had from the outset divided the world between Muslim and non-Muslim territories, Islam would never have spread. If Muslim politicians had not used offensive language, if they had not collaborated with the British to widen the breach between Hindus and Muslims, the number of Muslims would have grown more. “Under British influence, we turned Islam into a confined system, and following in the footsteps of other communities like Jews, Parsis and Hindus we transformed ourselves into a hereditary community. The Indian Muslims have frozen Islam and its message and divided themselves into many sects. Some sects were clearly born at the instance of colonial

power. Consequently, these sects became devoid of all movement and dynamism and lost faith in Islamic values.” *Ulema (the priesthood) would play a bigger role in Pakistan, but Islam would lose its sheen.*

When the interviewer pointed out that the Ulema were with Jinnah, Azad said that those who invented a new religion for Akbar were also Ulema. The number of Ulema who find an honourable mention in history could be counted on the fingers of one hand — Imam Hanbal, Ibn Taimiyya, and, in India, Shah Waliullah and his family. Alf Sani was a brave Alim, but those who got him imprisoned were also Ulema.

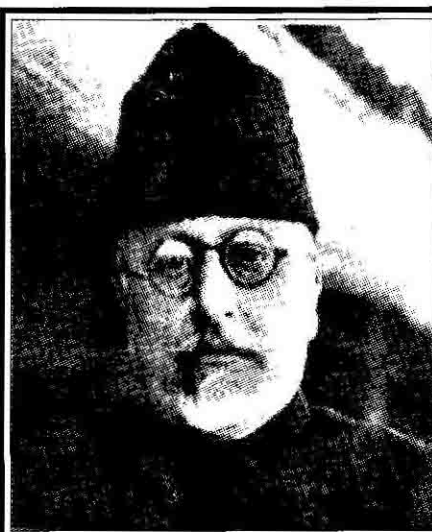
The interviewer asked what was wrong if Pakistan

came into being; after all, it would protect the unity of Muslims. Azad said that all Hindus would have to leave Pakistan. All Muslims could not be accommodated in Pakistan; some 30 million would have to stay back in India. They would face three choices: they might migrate to Pakistan, they would become victims of riots until the generation that had to experience Partition passed away, or they would convert to Hinduism.

Pakistan would be controlled by outside powers; India would have no problem with that because it would keep Pak hostility in check. **East Pakistan would secede once Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan passed away; that would leave West Pakistan open to regional conflicts and balkanization.** Muslim businessmen wanted Pakistan because they feared competition.

The interviewer said that in Pakistan, Muslims would be able to keep their communal identity intact and be good Muslim citizens. Azad said that they had been able to

do so under British rule: why should they fear they would not be able to do so in a democratic



“Under British influence, we turned Islam into a confined system, and following in the footsteps of other communities like Jews, Parsis and Hindus we transformed ourselves into a hereditary community. The Indian Muslims have frozen Islam and its message and divided themselves into many sects. Some sects were clearly born at the instance of colonial power. Consequently, these sects became devoid of all movement and dynamism and lost faith in Islamic values.”

India in which they would have a voice? India's border states

(Bengal, Punjab, Sind, the North-Western Frontier Province, Baluchistan) had Muslim majorities and shared borders with Muslim countries; there was no way Muslims could be eliminated. Jinnah himself was an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity. Till 1937 he had opposed Partition. Then the Congress formed governments in seven states and excluded the Muslim League. In 1940, Jinnah adopted the demand for Pakistan in an effort to check Muslim political decline.

The interviewer asked why Muslims had become so impervious to reason. Azad said that the Muslims' was the misplaced enthusiasm of a mob; when people lose confidence and self-respect, they are engulfed by imaginary doubts and dangers and they fail to make a distinction between right and wrong. The true meaning of life is realized, not through numerical strength, but through firm faith and righteous action. If Muslims' lives are in danger, Partition would not remove the danger;

it would haunt their borders, and expose them to armed conflict in

which many more lives would be lost.

The interviewer said that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations with different inclinations; how could they ever be united? Azad said that freedom was a blessing, a right of every citizen; it could not be divided on the basis of religion. Muslims were divided amongst many well-entrenched sects. There were Wahhabis, Sunnis and Shias, and many more sects owing allegiance to various saints and divines. For them, allegiance to Islam meant allegiance to their own sect. Even small issues like raising the hand while praying and saying 'Amen' loudly had created insoluble disputes. The Ulema dealt with disputes by using *taqfeer* (branding people as infidels). Once they used to take Islam to disbelievers; now they took away Islam from believers. Muslims had come to prefer politics to religion and to pursue worldly ambitions as commands of religion.

Finally, the interviewer asked Azad why he had closed down his magazine, *Al-Hilal* — whether he had felt as if he was proclaiming *azan* (call to prayer)

in a barren desert. Azad said that on the contrary, editing *Al-Hilal* had enriched his life; he felt like one of Prophet Mohammed's companions. "My own voice entranced me and I burnt out like a phoenix." But he came to the conclusion that the freedom of Asia and Africa depended on the freedom of India, and that Hindu-Muslim

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad failed in his endeavour to make Muslims a part of independent India's mainstream. Jinnah walked away with Pakistan. But its later history followed Azad's predictions with brutal accuracy.

unity was the key to India's freedom.

Even before World War-I he realized that India was bound to get its freedom and that no power on earth could deny it. "I ardently wished that Muslims would learn to walk together with their countrymen and not give an opportunity to history to say that when Indians were fighting for their independence, Muslims were looking on as spectators. Let

nobody say that instead of fighting the waves they were standing on the banks and showing mirth on the drowning of boats carrying the freedom fighters."

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad failed in his endeavour to make Muslims a part of independent India's mainstream. Jinnah walked away with Pakistan. But its later history followed Azad's predictions with brutal accuracy. He was right about India too, except in one respect: he did not anticipate that Muslims would become a poor, backward community in India. The Muslims that stayed back were poorer than those who migrated; but that

is not the only reason why they have fallen behind. There is also informal discrimination. True, India gives a Sania Mirza or Azim Premji the chance to rise and shine. But it also is home to much Hindutwit prejudice. A united India would not have removed the prejudice. But discrimination would perhaps have worked differently; it would have led to ghettos.



Courtesy : The Telegraph

HOW COW BECAME SACRED

□ K.P. Prakasam

The Karnataka state government has enacted recently a legislation to ban cow slaughter, bringing the state into the company of several other BJP ruled states where a law to this effect exists in one form or other. It is to appease the predominantly superstitious extremist fringe of Hindu society which, by and large, venerates the cow.

This brings us to the larger question of how cow worship originated. It will take us to the hoary past, to the twilight zone of pre-historic Aryan migration in waves of *ganas*(groups). The discovery of fire and the domestication of animals took primitive man to another historic transition period called *Treta Yuga*, centred round Agni, the god of fire, *Agni deva*. According to the Vedic

time scale, the world, since its inception, passes through four Yugas, *Satyayugas*, *Treta*, *Dwapara* and *Kali Yugas*. Scholars agree that Aryan migration took place sometime around the *Treta Yuga*. We are living in the *Kali Yuga*, at the end of which there would be *Pralaya*, the Great Deluge, which will wipe out everything on earth, and a new cycle of Creation will begin, the Vedas contend.

The turning point was when primitive man abandoned his bestial life in the forests, partially stopped hunting as a means of livelihood, cleared forests near rivers and other water sources and took to cultivation. He found certain animals useful in his new enterprise and thus began domestication of animals.

The mode of production of the Aryan commune at *Treta Yuga* was called *Yajna*, the centre of which was a big fire place, called *Yajna Vedi*, and the entire commune participated in it. They lived in a collective in which men either worked in the fields or gathered fire wood, hunted animals, while women tended domestic animals and looked after children and the aged.

The whole produce was brought to a common place called *Yajna Vedi*, the game animals were roasted in fire, some sort of *roti* made of stone-ground wheat or barley baked in fire and a heady brew called *Soma* prepared for the *Yajna*. After setting apart a share for Gods and forefathers (the early Aryans believed that though dead and burnt and transformed into *panchabhootas* — five

elements — the sky, air, fire, water, and earth— the ancestors still lived with them and were part of the commune and did partake of the offerings. This belief is still prevalent.)

Then the entire commune shared the fruits of their joint labour, fed well, drank the intoxicating *Soma rasa*, danced around the fire, picked a partner and retired to the huts for the production of progeny. Thus, jointly labouring and enjoying, the Aryan commune progressed and multiplied. One could find any number of instances of this kind of life in the Rig Veda, believed to be the first of its kind among the Vedas — not four, as is commonly believed, but many.

Domestic animals played a decisive role in the progress and health of Aryan commune at this stage of its growth. One of the wild animals man found and domesticated was the horse. Anthropologists believe that horse might have been the first animal to be domesticated by the Aryan tribes when they changed from nomadic to settled, agricultural life. Horse could take him from place to place, could help him carry

wood, game animals and fruits collected from forests and bring it to the collective in which he lived, often in the open, or in caves or huts thatched with leaves.

Gradually, man began to domesticate many more animals, which included dogs, deer, goat, cow and buffalo. Of these, man found the cow most useful, as it yielded sweet and nutritious milk, cow-dung could be used as manure, its meat when cooked in bonfire, provided tasty food, and its skin, when dried, was found better clothing compared to mere leaves. (The Aryan nomads were never vegetarian) **It was this all-round utility of this particular animal that forced Aryans to take special care of the animal, feed and bathe it, and in course of time almost venerate it as provider of everything he wanted in life, Kama Dhenu** — that which grants all one desires in life.

According to legend, *Kama Dhenu* was one of the things that emerged from *Ksheera Sagara*, the Sea of Milk, along with the Moon, nectar and the deadly poison

Kaalakoota during churning of the Sea of Milk by the *Devas* with the help of *Asuras*. This cow is considered the mother of all animals and is believed to be living in *Deva Loka* (Abode of Gods under custody of the sage Vasistha).

The question now is, if cow is the mother of all animals, as is claimed by legend, not only cow but all animals should be protected and venerated since all animals are children of *Kama dhenu* (*Nandi—that which gives*). The Vedic man venerated all. In the beginning he used to hunt and eat almost all animals. The intrinsic change came when settled agricultural life began. Considering the greater utility of the cow, he imposed a social ban on killing this extremely useful animal for food so long as it remained productive. Instead, his choice fell on the horse (*Ashwa*) and that might be the beginning of the *Ashwamedha Yagna*, the ceremonial killing of the horse at the *Mahavedi*.

That brings us face to face with yet another aspect. If *Kama dhenu* is the mother of entire animal kingdom, sanctity must be attached to all of them.

The Aryans did, and protected all animal and plant life. (In following this principle, Jainism is much closer to original precepts than Hinduism.) But Vedic man allowed the killing of any animal, if killing is for eating. And this applied to birds and plants too, since all of them have life. Take for instance the incidence of the sage Valmiki, the first poet and author of the famous epic *Ramayana*. He sat down to write the story of wanderings of Rama (*Rama+Ayana*, meaning journey of Rama). Just at that moment a Krouncha bird, shot at by a hunter, fell at his feet, as its pair flew away. That evoked anger in the sage which burst forth as the first-ever poem, a curse on the hunter:

*“Maa! Nishada!
Pranishtam!, twamagama
sashwati sama:*

*Twat Krouncha
mithunaamekam Avani
kaama mohita.”*

*(Oh, Hunter, HALT,
you will not attain ultimate
Salvation, as you have killed
one of a pairing Krouncha
birds).*

The sage was extremely dejected as the first words of spontaneous outburst of anger into a poem turned out to be a

curse. *Narada*, the son of Brahma, an all-knowing regular wanderer of all the three worlds (Earth, Heaven and the Netherworld) suddenly appeared on the scene and explained to the sage that there was nothing wrong with the hunter's action because killing of birds or animals for his survival was his *dharma*.

***Cow and Corruption
are equally protected under
BJP rule. Not only cow,
but all members of the
animal kingdom, should be
protected, since the very
existence of man on earth
depends on the totality of
balanced existence of
Nature with all its denizens,
the environment in which
he lives.***

Satisfied, Valmiki resumed his poetic pursuit. I mentioned this incidence because of its relevance to our context—**killing a bird or animal for food is not a taboo.**

Later, followers of Aryan customs and traditions merely aped the ritual part of many customs and beliefs without understanding their social and economic implications and the role they played in primitive

Aryan commune life. They tried to bodily implant them into modern society.

Today the cow does not play a prominent role even in predominantly pastoral regions, not even a fraction of what it used to play in Aryan communes. Aryans did not attach any particular holiness to cow; to them everything in Nature was holy. The view in the context of modern living is that cow should be protected and looked after so long as it remains useful to man, though this view amounts to homocentric selfishness. Not only cow, but all members of the animal kingdom, should be protected, since the very existence of man on earth depends on the totality of balanced existence of Nature with all its denizens, the environment in which he lives.

And our man Thackeray, still living in the Vedic commune era, attaches the same veneration to cow, notwithstanding the intrinsic changes that have come about in the life of twenty-first century man, and exhorts his flock to stick to the Vedic traditions even if they have become relics of the past. Of course, customs and traditions die hard but only die-hard fanatics cling on to obsolete observances.

Moral Education

In 1882, the Education Commission was all set to prepare a textbook for moral education so that it could be imparted to students being prepared for modern professions required by the colonial government. There is however no record of implementing this measure. The administration could not venture into dealing with the nature of religious difficulties in establishing a common factor in moral education for all Indians ardently pursuing different religious affiliations. Now India is free and the public is very much aware of lack of morality in functioning of bureaucrats and politicians in spite of valiant efforts of the honest minority and the national leaders professing various faith. We have to stress only the highest common factor of ethical action recommended for human beings by logic of civilized living and desire to improve the lot of poorest of the poor.

A country can prosper only when there is more

production, more enablement of the people to earn their living, freedom of trade and commerce and a rule of law ensuring that everyone benefits from the opportunity to better his/her standard of living, education and housing etc. Any ostentatious style will be regressive at this stage of production and saving when there is so much poverty and dearth of infrastructure or cleanliness. Moral education if there is illegal self advancement, it only means to rob Peter to pay Paul. Moral education is to liberate the human being from addiction to self interest at the cost of honesty and fair play. It is to arouse the humanist quality in him/her which is there in plenty.

Moral education is like the classical books, more admired than imbibed. The British Poets attracted Indians educated in the western way and regarded the Englishman as of high moral integrity forgetting that their chief task in India was to stay put as rulers. The educated Indians neglected great Indian poets and philosophers like Tulsi Das, Guru

Nanak, Bhakta Kabir or Maulana Azad, who would have drawn then towards morality and humanism. It was the wisdom and far sight of modern leaders like Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, and many freedom fighters whose sacrifice and devotion to the Indian independence kept alive some element of sacrifice and morality. After independence, with the revolutionary zeal in decay. We have to re-ignite the continuous revolution in the minds of the educated Indian to dismiss the pressure of their kinsmen and own attraction for unearned windfalls. The Sikh empire which was the culmination of innumerable sacrifices and the high sense of loyalty to the throne came to ruin when only a few kinsmen and close associates of the Maharaja sold their loyalty for private and easeful life as pets of the colonialists. The brave Khalsa was also morally lost when they started taking pride in the new found loyalty to the colonial rulers who rewarded them handsomely at the cost of the country.

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Bribery Jolt to BJP from Ramdev

□ *Tapas Chakraborty*

Lucknow, Nov. 20: Baba Ramdev has alleged a bribe demand by an Uttarakhand minister two years ago, staggering the ruling BJP at a time it is trying to corner the Congress over the 2G spectrum scandal.

The yoga guru's allegation came on Thursday, just three days after Ratan Tata's hint about a Union minister's Rs 15-crore demand over an airline deal in 1997.

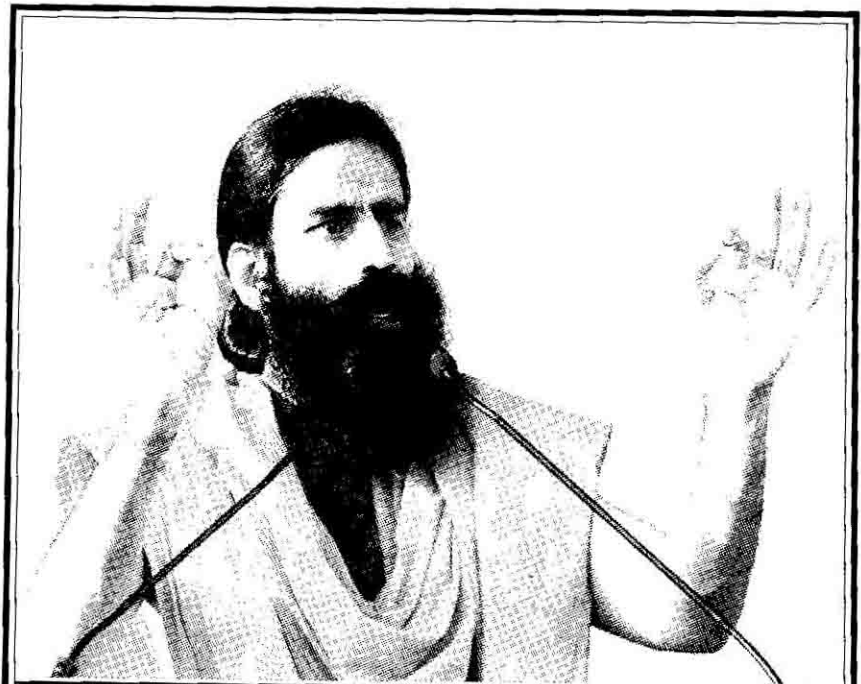
Political circles have in recent months been abuzz with speculation that Ramdev plans to float his own political party next year and contest the 2012 Uttarakhand polls on an anti-corruption plank.

Like Tata, the yoga guru did not name the minister concerned.

"I was asked by an Uttarakhand minister from

added, "When I complained to the chief minister, I was told that the minister should not have asked for a bribe but for a donation."

In 2008, the chief minister



Baba Ramdev

Hardwar two years ago to pay a bribe of Rs 2 crore to set up a new trust," Ramdev told a yoga camp in Gonda in Uttar Pradesh. He

was B.C. Khanduri (who was replaced by Romesh Pokhriyal in June last year). Khanduri today denied that Ramdev had met him

after the alleged bribe demand. "Baba should approach a neutral investigating agency and bring that minister to book. He should not merely create confusion," Khanduri told **The Telegraph**.

Ramdev, who is now in Basti district of Uttar Pradesh, today said his intention was not to target an individual minister. "Corruption is endemic in our system and if I join politics, I will do that with a mission to end this menace," he said.

BJP spokesperson Mukesh Mahendru, however, insisted that Ramdev name the minister. His comments came as the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Congress today held street demonstrations in Uttarakhand

asking the "corrupt BJP government" to step down.

BJP leaders claim that Ramdev wants to create a vote bank among the upper castes in Uttarakhand as well as Uttar Pradesh, where too he wants to contest polls in the near future.

They are even more alarmed that the yoga guru is strengthening his already close ties with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh while undermining the BJP, after enjoying years of patronage from the Uttarakhand government.

Ramdev recently held a series of yoga camps in Uttar Pradesh, coinciding them with Sangh meetings across the state,

and virtually followed *Sarsanghachalak* Mohan Bhagwat wherever he went.

"He is wooing the Sangh and even offering it help to open new *shakhas*, but is all the while criticising BJP leaders," a BJP source complained.

In Lucknow, state BJP leaders today told the visiting national president, Nitin Gadkari, that Ramdev's political ambitions might spoil the party's revival plans in the heartland.

Gadkari, here to chalk out the revival road map, did not make any statement against Ramdev but party leaders are maintaining their distance from the yoga guru.

□□

Continued from page No. - 39

Almost the same is the story of the Maratha empire which came with a fanfare of secular freedom for whole of India but lay prostrate at the feet of Indian armies led by the wily but morally superior British against hollow Maratha leadership pulling in different directions often dictated by the petticoats. The whole Indian debacle was a display of shortcomings in elementary morality either of husbands, or of wives or of their ignorant retinue. Now when in democratic India all of us the voters are the rulers, let us resolve to keep the banner of morality as the banner of free

India. We should not pay attention to British planted crises that belittles Indian foreign policy as only a continuous lesson in morality. It is the acceptance of such a lesson that the world escaped another world war at the peak of the cold war.

It is the need to morality in civilized life that made it necessary to give important place to religion and religious instruction was primarily to inculcate morality. Only when religion became a prime spot for personal profit that people started hankering for a simplistic philosophy to give them an anchor

in life. Scientific approach, secularism and humanism could fill the vacuum of lost faith. A God of prayer and a personal god will always exist for people who wish self help for success in the most desirable of all efforts, that of being active in the welfare of others. A remarkable ideal is to work for a universal utopia of justice and prosperity for all in the united world, we must make.

J.N.Nanda,
(Director, *ZaheerScience*
Foundation
4, Udyan Marg, New Delhi -
110 001.)

□

Secular Democracy Website Launched

On October 30, 2010, Shri Motilal Vora, chairman of Quami Ekta Trust and treasurer of the Indian National Congress successfully launched the website of *Secular Democracy*. Speaking on this occasion, he said that it was going to fulfil a long-felt desire of the readers and well-wishers of the journal. He paid profuse homage to the late Shrimati Subhadra Joshi whom he described as a patriot and champion of communal harmony and Hindu-Muslim unity. She devoted her entire life to championing the cause of secularism by following the path charted by Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

With the website coming into existence, Shri Vora said, the message of *Secular Democracy* would reach more and more people and the fight against communalism would get strengthened. He showered fulsome praise on journalist Nupur Sharma for designing the

website and thus helping the realization of a long felt dream. She deserved the gratitude of all those associated with the Qaumi Ekta Trust.

Shri Shashi Bhushan, a former M.P. and longtime associate of Subhadraji paid

Shrimati Jyotsna Sharma, vice-chair person of the Trust welcomed the guests and narrated how the people associated with *Secular Democracy* had been striving towards having the website.

A large number of well-



Shri Motilal Vora speaking, Jyotsna Sharma and Shri Shashi Bhushan look on.

tributes to her and narrated a number of anecdotes to illustrate how she was uncompromising in her fight against communalism and how she defeated a stalwart like Atal Bihari Vajpayee in the Lok Sabha election in 1962.

wishers and activists such as Ms. Nupur Sharma, Prof. Arjun Dev, Shiv Kumar Mishra, Dr. Namdev, social activist Shafi Dehalvi, Rajiv Ranjan Giri and Dr. Girish Mishra were present.

□